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Bard

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Here at the dining room table
where it all began
in pleasant sunlight
the house so quiet,
paper spread on the clean
smooth wood, the words,
this middle-class art,
this poetry.

Quiet house
everybody out or still asleep
wall clock the only music,
a hand makes free with words.

Hours pass, dark now
around the house, the windows
reflect only what's in here,
no city any more, words
here again at the table
noises all around,
other people, duty,

**the young mind
half-hungry half-
scornful, doing
its lessons,
this homework, this poetry.**

1 March 2014

= = = = =

**Gave me one more
book I'll never read.
I think the body of
the one who wrote it—
generous as flesh
as breath, selfish
like language itself,
all our bodies
are one body, be
near me, I close
my empty eyes and read.**

1 March 2014

SALOME

**Crying for help.
Andaman Islanders
are said never
to have discovered
the dance. Unlikely.
She dances but
won't dance for me.
I need to see you
do it, it is the only
thing I have not seen.
The imaginable invisible
ruby at the core of the mind.**

1 March 2014

= = = = =

**Death must be nearby,
I'm starting to tell the truth.
I am as far as
a lie can carry.
Deer at the feeder
eating fallen birdseed
black oil seeds and millet
in deep snow, bright sun.
There. Now death
has passed by
and the deer wander slow.
It's not easy.
I can go back
to making things up.**

1 March 2014

= = = = =

Stepping careful
pocket full of bees—
sunshine is like that,
a prayer-wheel clattering.
Everything
knows how to bless.
I've been asleep for a week.
Two deer
out there.
Somehow I feel
the flowers on the table
have forgiven me
for the quiet adoration
such things get
in dining rooms
in strong sun
as if we claimed
to be the world
they meant by being.

1 March 2014

= = = = =

Curved around the body and into the body
;like a hand but was it a hand, it was dark
a specific street in London remember Jessica
but it wasn't raining, the American girl
needed a very specific kind of friend, the body
but was it a body, the curve of a hand around
what can't be counted on, not really, a light
above the doorway almost an invitation.
We take things as we find them he said
on the phone, far away, Dorset maybe,
a primitive rock in his hand he would give her
when she came later, later, she would
wake up with the stone in her hand.

2.

Lyssa told me all this, even she eats breakfast,
there has to be inside the body a clear
separation between darkness and light, this
is called food, and it is the reciprocal relation
of inside and outside, see, we have never
seen each other eating, that is the truth,

or eating each other either, ever, the words
falter when they think about us, the stage
is dingy with light, how can light be so grey,
how can the bodies be so lifeless and still
move slowly from pool of dead light through
darkness to another pool, we suffer from light,
cenotes drown us in the limestone jungles,
down in the underground the roar at Holborn
wakes her, she fell asleep on the street,
breakfast is so important, why haven't I
ever seen you eating, don't you trust me
at all, don't you want to take these shadows
and squeeze them till they're solid
then hold them in your arms all night,
I thought I wanted this, I thought I was you.

(1 March 2014)

= = = = =

My name is this.

Who do you want me to be?

They are running through the snow—

it is paleography out there

how to read ancient

writing in an unknown or little

known language,

tracks in the snow.

For everything means.

Every percept has meaning

and you have to mean it.

Look at things.

The presumption is

if you know them

really know them

you will know me.

2 March 2014. *Lo.gSar.*

= = = = =

as if I could the numbers
right out of your hair
and get them to make sense
not just counting the steps
to get where I must be
but all the things that turn
into me along the way.
I die in things. Linger
is marrying space. Stay,
stay. Sometimes at the window
I am another person
meekly seeing out. But I know
there is no out, all
that out there is a smoky mirror
showing the face of a man
named me who does not exist.
Now you know why I love your hair.

2 March 2014

= = = = =

I know they're going to ask me
what I mean by what I mean.
All I can tell is a hand touches,
a circle rolls, a moth
remembers all the lights round
which it ever flew to die.
There are no accidents.
Sometimes the mind is too big
or too busy to fit inside
this amiable ruin of a body.
Is that when sleep happens,
or visions, seizures, all
nature trying to escape itself.
And matter is our other dream.

2 March 2014

a word about Thomas McEvilley, at his passing.

When you paint a girl blue and roll her on a canvas or when you paint your hand with red ochre and press it on a wall you are doing the same thing, making the same sort of thing. The mess of meaning. Nobody knows what you have in mind in doing so. But that is not important, thank God. There are people, and McEvilley was among the smartest of them, who know that the mark gets made in us. He doesn't care about the 30,000 years that separate such marks, marks that could be generated tomorrow if there were such a thing as time. So art criticism could be nothing without literature, and literature could be nothing without the cave-like solitude crazy self-encounter that gets cleaned up and publicked as philosophy. I marvel at the breadth of McEvilley's generosity, his insistence on tracing thinking back and forth, our Europe, their Asia, their Europe, our Asia, their hands on the walls of our mind. I suspect McEvilley knew there was no such thing as time, only space, space of cave, canvas, display case, window, śloka, stanza, epic. What is any epic poem but a refutation of time, the whole war in your hand (as in Homer or Quintus of Smyrna). We say of someone who has died that he has gone away. Proof enough of the poverty of time, the richness of space, into which such

animals can prowl. The work of his that touched me most was the literary,—I feel uneasy using that word about a man, one of the few I ever met, who could talk about everything. The context was complete in him, and everything could be said. Those years of saying everything else, art, culture, poiesis, and all the while he was making that giant book —read it if you can — that showed so clearly that we get what we think from the same place we get language, the breath of the other.

R.K.

= = = = =

deep answers
cast their spell before them,
the tremble of soon
on the banks of never
as if a river
of pure unrolling cloth
from an infinite loom
white muslin
stretched across the sky
like the slow movement
of Ravel's piano concerto in G
cloth lifting and settling in the wind
as if it too loved me
the way I want to love you
beyond all distinctions
of personality of property
identity, we are pure sanctity
across the categories um
or is another word what I mean,
the bones of being
on which this simple wish is strung?

*No framework but desire,
no fishpond but the winter moon
looking at us so deeply,
memorizing our faces for us,
blind man's mirror, the one
we never see, the philosophy
of midnight holds tight,
tighter, till we let go.*

3 March 2014

[The three lines in roman were dreamt, as isolate lines I woke with this morning, the lines in italic added now, 4:20 in the afternoon.]

= = = = =

Today I am devoted
the time I thought I owned
owns me. I am in London
again. I am at somebody's door.

This is narrative. A story
is a shame hiding in details,
in the weather. I ring the bell.
The one who answers answers me.

Or another day the population fixed
like an old negative awaking in its tray
and slowly dawning into political meaning
but no one ever actually moves.

I had come three thousand miles
carrying only my unfocused desires
as Dante says somewhere, back
when we were permitted to read again

**but now is never and the only stars
sparkle in her lap it seems
Hello may I come in? But
you have never been outside.**

3 March 2014

[Morning Lune]

**Little cars follow
big slow truck.
Everynbody's late.**

3.III.2014

EPYLLION

Never let a story out of its cage.

**But if the train tracks flood
cold knees come morning**

**and if the door doesn't open
no one's the wiser
the happening never happened**

**and the bright flag rose
over a deserted island
and the wind was glad.**

3 March 2014

